

in committee, I'll give him the balance of the opening so he can explain the bill.

SPEAKER BAACK: Senator Bernard-Stevens.

SENATOR BERNARD-STEVENS: Thank you. I think...Mr. Chairman, Chairman Moore, Speaker Baack and members of the body, I introduced on behalf of the Appropriations Committee LB 838 to the Education Committee. The Education Committee chose to advance the bill without any amendments so the green copy is, in fact, the bill. In essence what the bill does is twofold. It takes the...it modifies the qualifications of persons eligible for reimbursement for transportation of enrollment option students and adjusts the rate of reimbursement per mile traveled. Specifically the following provisions are made. Number one, only those persons who qualify for free lunches would be eligible for the current transportation funding. Right now, for the information of the body, those who qualify for free or reduced lunch price meals are eligible, so this would take away the eligibility of the reduced price. Two, the rate of reimbursement becomes 142.5 percent of the rate provided in Section 81-1176 which is basically 24 cents per mile. This is half of the rate that is currently used. The current rate is 285 percent of 24 cents per mile. The miles reimbursement are those traveled one way less the statutory three miles from the schoolhouse. Another note, that there is another bill out there on Select File, LB 348, and if this bill should advance and eventually become law, we will have to modify the language either in 348 and/or in this one so that both of those bills are compatible in regard to the language. That, in essence, is the bill. To summarize, we've done two things. We've changed the rate from 285 percent, we've cut it in half to the 142.5. That would be about two and a half to three trips I believe is what it would be and we've also reduced it. Those that qualify for the cost to be simply those who qualify for free and reduced lunch. That's the nature of the bill and I'd give the balance of my time back to the Chair.

SPEAKER BAACK: Thank you, Senator Bernard-Stevens. Any discussion on the advancement of LB 838? Seeing none, do you wish to close? Waives closing. We will now vote on the advancement of 838. All those in favor vote aye, opposed vote no. Record, Mr. Clerk.

CLERK: 26 ayes, 0 nays, Mr. President, on the advancement of